

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: June 16, 2016

Meeting #227

Project: Rash Field Redevelopment

Phase: Discussion

Location: 201 Key Highway, Baltimore MD 21230

PRESENTATION:

Laurie Schwartz, President of Waterfront Partnership, introduced the updated presentation and funding package for the redevelopment of Rash Field – a 7-acre urban waterfront park along the south Inner Harbor Promenade. Richard Jones, Landscape Architect and President of Mahan Rykiel, reviewed key comments from the previous discussion and addressed the corresponding changes in the updated proposal:

South Edge

- Planted strip along Key Highway with integrated bicycle and pedestrian median and no additional sidewalk per DOT plans
- Widened Southeast corner entry to the park with revised circulation
- Shading trees in built-in planters and storm water treatment at Bleachers area with crushed gravel at the bottom and concrete walkway at the top levels

Promenade and Game Allee

- Increased porosity along North Edge of park with more defined entries
- Proposed seating directed the waterfront promenade and quieter sitting ‘rooms’ engaging the Game Allee
- Undulating geometry and tree pattern along entire North Edge of the park
- Formal gathering area and sculptural feature at Northeast Entry and central ‘stitch’ zone between beach volleyball and soccer fields

The Overlook

- Revised general circulation that accommodates the bicycle path along Key Highway
- Reconfigured Southwest entry with reduced stair width and relocated built-in slide
- Redesigned accessible pathway from Key highway to park lower levels with additional vegetation for screening of parking lot
- Pride Memorial location unchanged
- 16ft high Climbing Peg Wall with rubberized surface below and glass guardrail above
- Rentals, storage and restrooms located under the Overlook area

Skate Park, Play Lab and Pavilion

- Widened Northwest entry and walkway towards Key Highway
- Wider terraces between Skate Park and Pavilion
- Additional programmed activity area at Play Lab
- Revised circulation from Pavilion area to upper level Overlook
- Industrial shed approach to the Pavilion architecture
- Revised entry zone between Pavilion and Promenade

Comments from the Panel:

The Panel applauded the changes in the design proposal with respect to the general movement and connectivity along the South and North edges of the park. The following comments address recommendations for further study:

- **Southeast Entry** – while finding the area significantly improved with respect to coordination and space allocation, the panel encouraged a closer study of the various activities that take place and the clear delineation of edges and surface materials in order to achieve further clarity of the arrival sequence to the park.
- **Southwest Entry** – the panel found the main circulation stair, leading to the lower level, unnecessarily compressed and functionally compromised by the relocated slide and recommended revision. Further, the proposed plaza seems to push too far against the proposed vegetation along Key Highway and can benefit from stronger definition with respect to all surrounding elements.
- **Promenade Entry** – the panel encouraged the design team to consider the opportunity to introduce a more significant entry point between the Café Pavilion and the Beach that will serve as a focal point, connect and align the Promenade entry to the Southwest entry of the park and Federal Hill Neighborhood across Key Highway via Battery Ave.
- **Northwest zone** – despite its increased circulation width, the panel found the area between the existing Science Center & Parking lot and the proposed Skate Park & Café largely unresolved and encouraged the design team to seek further clarity in the informal circulation pattern through the use of surface materials and implied hierarchy. Considering the intensive programming throughout the site, the panel recommended restraint and an area of respite for this zone. Further comments included pursuing more gracious circulation between the Promenade, the Café and Skate Park with the need for a more heroic, emphatic and sculptural approach to the Pavilion.
- **Pride Memorial** – the panel encouraged reconsideration of the Pride Memorial location and spatial quality expressing concerns over its detachment from the water in the proposed location & configuration and the lack of contemplative experience. Some suggestions included placing the memorial closer to the end of the Overlook in order to create a destination, relocating it to one of the Promenade entries and introducing an implied and symbolic relationship to water.
- **Programmatic restraint & material articulation** – the panel invited the project team to exercise restraint with respect to areas in the plan where multiple conflicting experiences take place (the Overlook Memorial/Climbing Wall/Rental/Entry area) and to continue to make cost-effective and strong tactical decisions to materials and products by designing out of the glass guardrails and introducing sculptural lighting and recreation equipment that enhances the park environment.

Panel Action:

No action needed.

Attending: Laurie Schwartz, Lauren Moloney- Waterfront Partnership
Richard Jones- Mahan Rykiel
Branden Brooks
Melody Simmons – BBJ
Paul Taylor – BCRP – Capitol Development

Messrs. Bowden, Ruben, Haresign, Burns and Ms. Ilieva* - UDARP Panel

Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield, Wolde Ararsa - Planning